

An aerial photograph of the Concord-Alewife area in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The image shows a mix of urban development, including residential neighborhoods, commercial buildings, and industrial areas. A large body of water, the Alewife Brook, is visible on the right side of the image. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Concord-Alewife Planning Study

## Public Meeting

March 27, 2003

Identifying Planning Goals:  
Discussion and Workshops



# Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Presentation: A review of the study area, issues, opportunities, and challenges
- Workshops: Looking at Concord-Alewife
- Reporting back
- Next steps

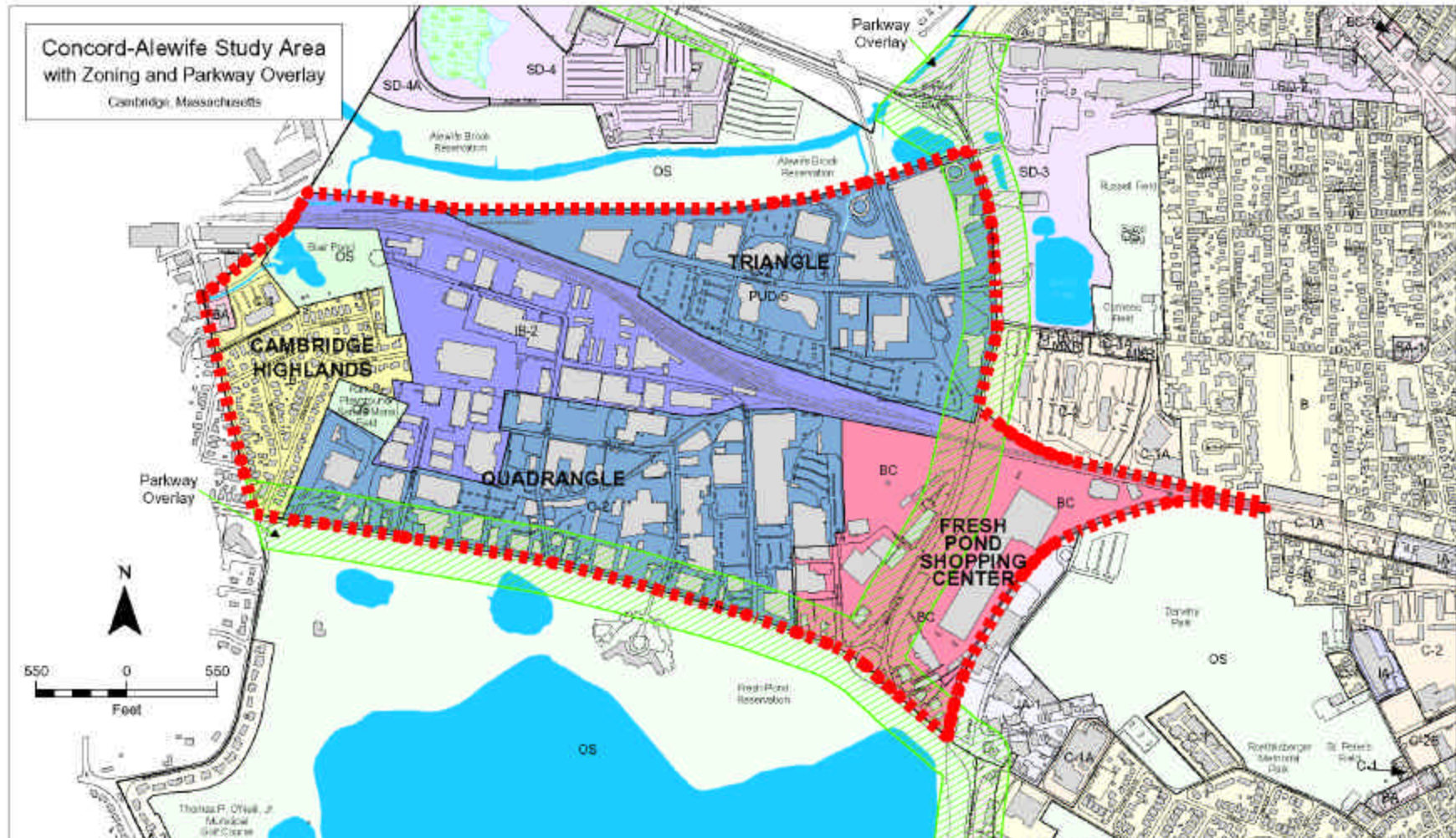


An aerial photograph of a suburban area with a red outline highlighting a specific study area. The area includes residential streets, commercial buildings, parking lots, and some green spaces. A large body of water is visible in the bottom left corner.

A look at the study area



# Zoning and land use





# Overview of the study area

The Highlands  
19 acres  
210 units housing





# Overview of the study area

Concord Avenue  
18 acres





# Overview of the study area

The Quadrangle  
80 acres





# Overview of the study area

The Triangle  
44 acres





# Overview of the study area

Shopping Centers  
20 acres





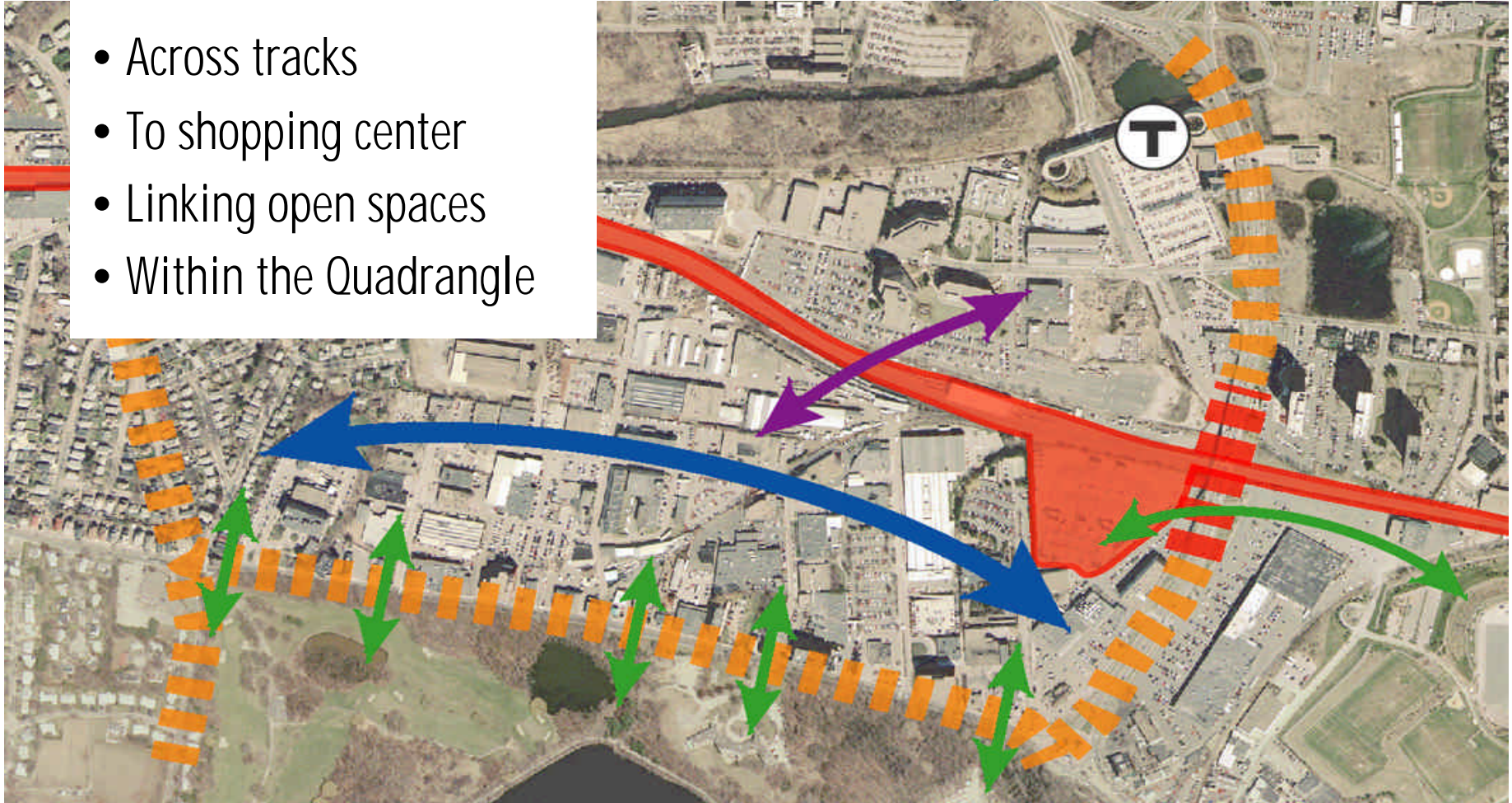
# The Concord Alewife Planning Study – Five Emerging Goals

- Overcoming barriers and improving connections.
- Supporting and enhancing the community.
- Building a real “sense of place.”
- Forming a district of “good neighbors.”
- Preserving the natural environment and enhancing access to open space.



# Overcoming barriers and improving connections: *Where are the opportunities?*

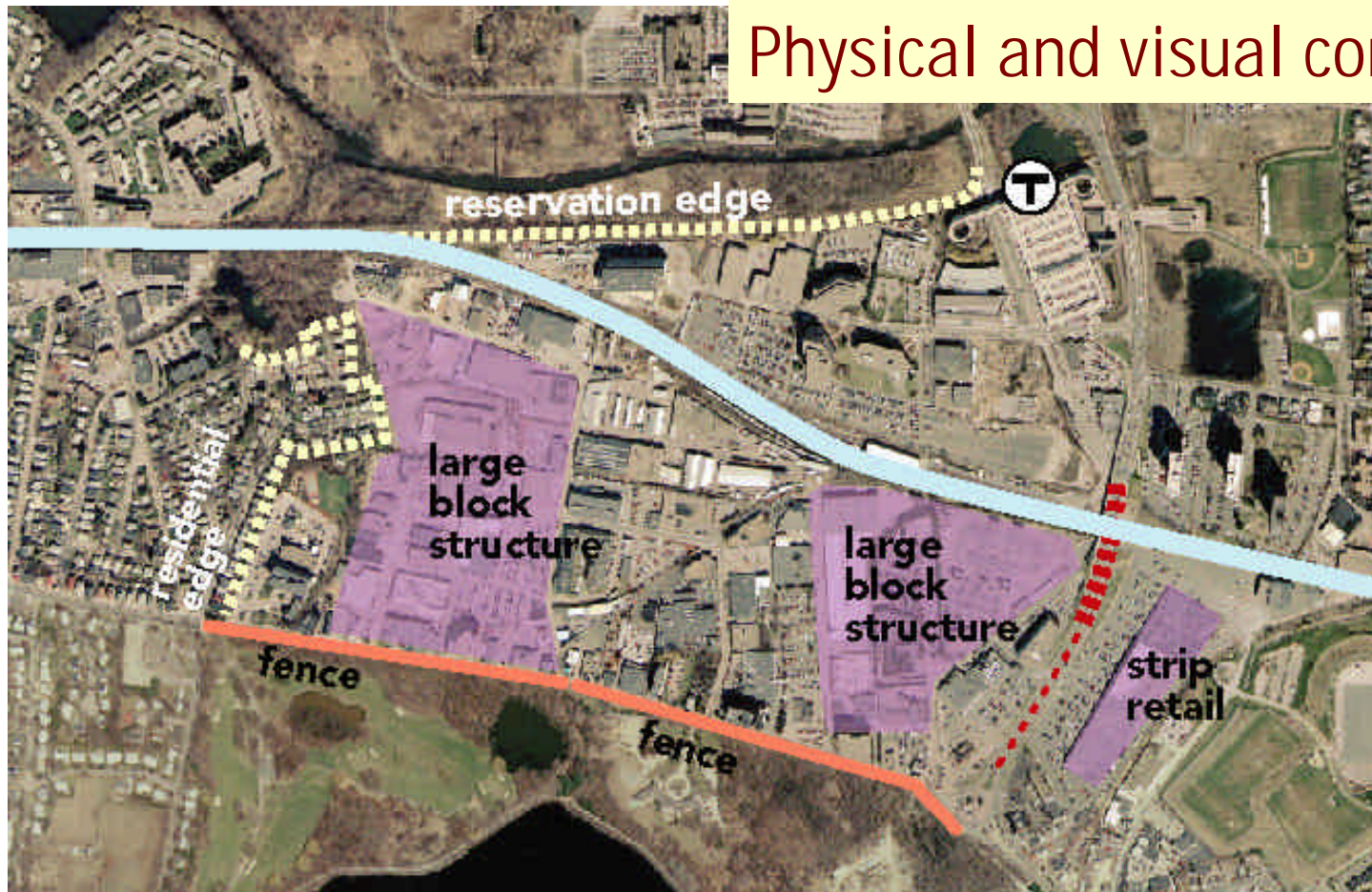
- Across tracks
- To shopping center
- Linking open spaces
- Within the Quadrangle





# Overcoming barriers and improving connections: What are the challenges?

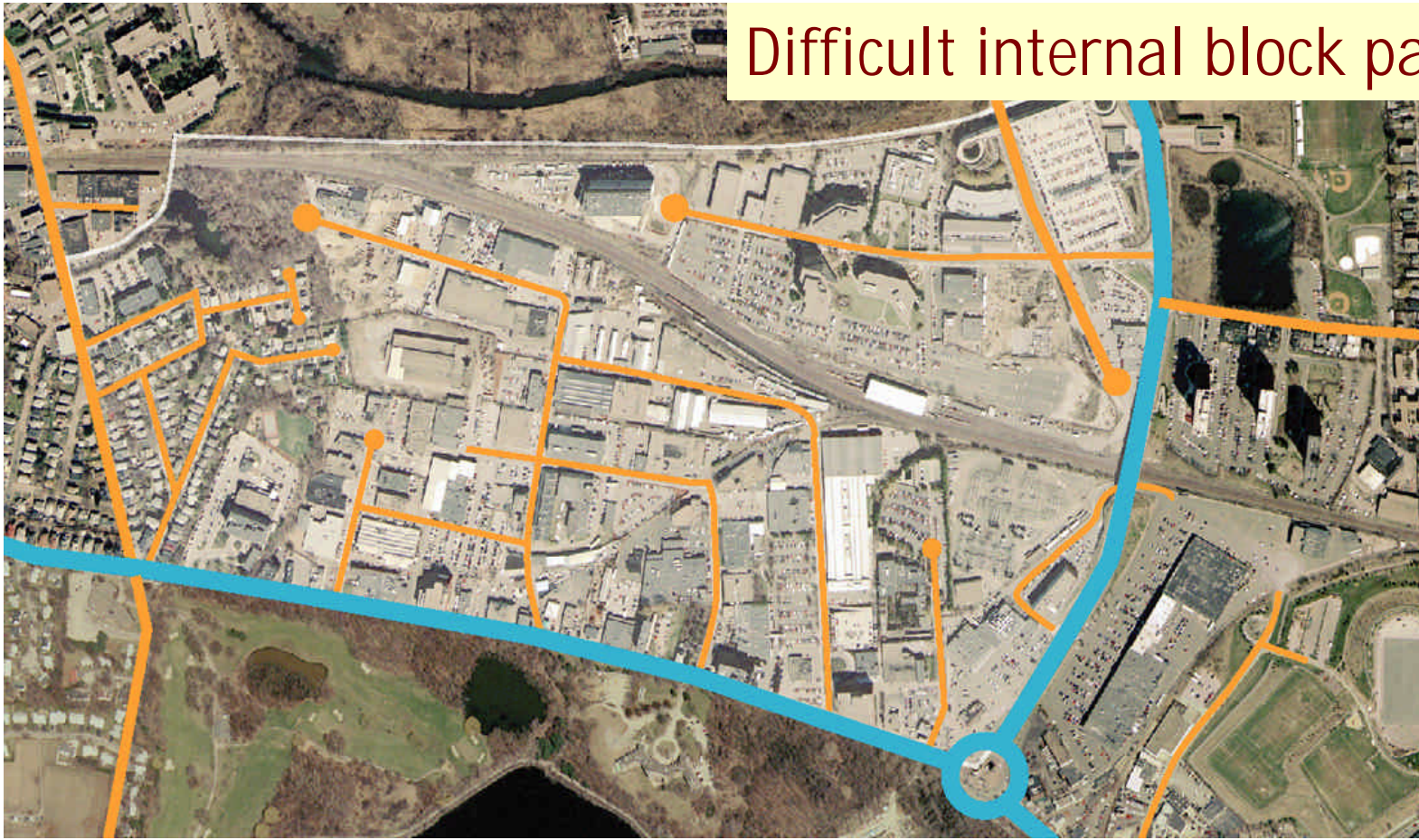
Physical and visual constraints





# Overcoming barriers and improving connections: What are the challenges?

Difficult internal block patterns





# Overcoming barriers and improving connections: What are the challenges?

Accessibility within the study area





# Overcoming barriers and improving connections: What are the challenges?

Accessibility within the study area





# Supporting and enhancing the Concord-Alewife community: *Where are the opportunities?*

- Build on the stability of the existing community.





# Supporting and enhancing the Concord-Alewife community: *Where are the opportunities?*

- Design new places and public spaces that support the community and a range of activities
- Make them accessible
- “Think personal and interactive”
  - Committee member



Pedestrian-friendly street with mixed uses



# Supporting and enhancing the Concord-Alewife community: *What are the challenges?*

- Lack of meeting places
- Lack of pedestrian access
- Lack of critical mass to support new community "hearts"

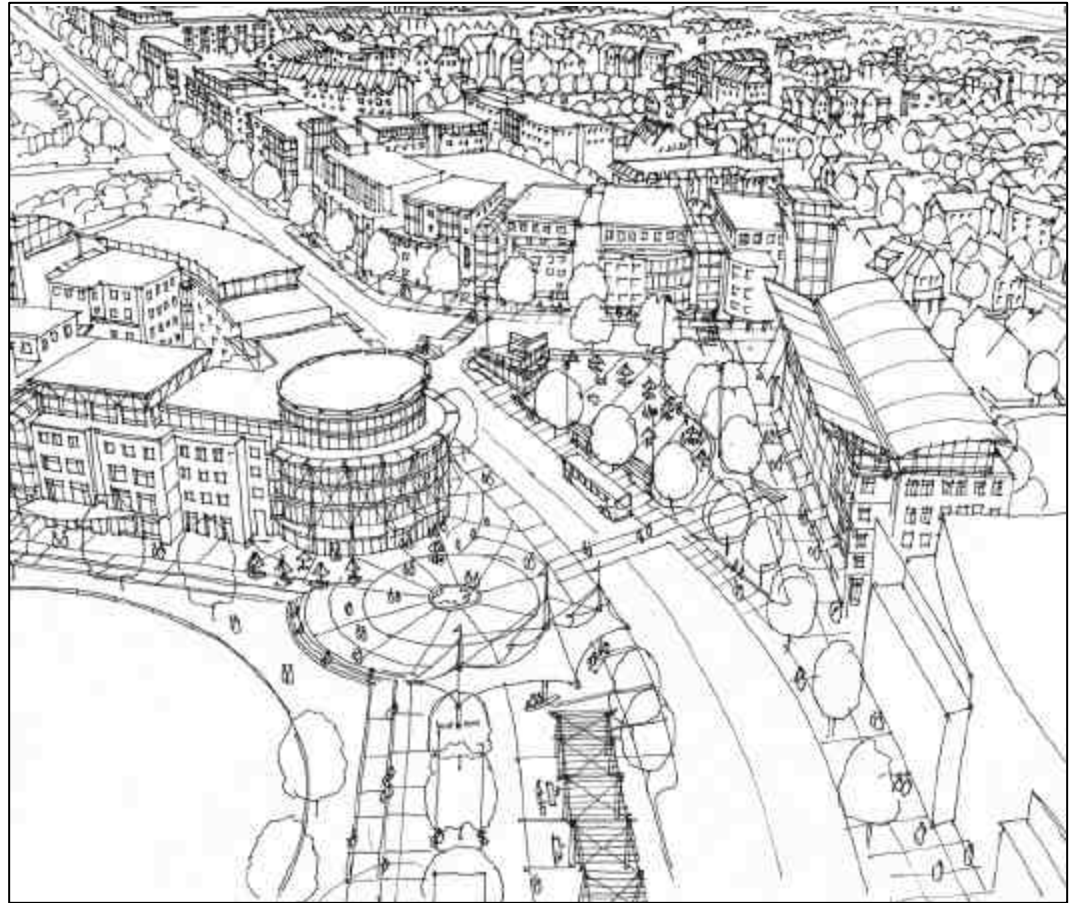




# Building a real “sense of place”: Where are the opportunities?

- Concord Avenue and Alewife Brook Parkway as true gateways
- Internal streets that welcome pedestrians
- Reinforcing connections to great outdoor spaces

Study for new  
neighborhood square





# Building a real “sense of place”: Where are the challenges?

- Concord Avenue:  
Discontinuous street edges with awkward mix of uses
- Alewife Brook Parkway:  
Suburban-style development and vast parking lots





# Building a real “sense of place”: Where are the challenges?

- Lack of distinction in the Quadrangle between public and private spaces
- Blurred line between pedestrian and auto realms
- No hierarchy of public uses or architecture





# Building a real “sense of place”: Where are the challenges?

- Lack of physical or visual corridors to outdoor spaces





# Forming a district of “good neighbors”: What are the opportunities?

- Potentially conflicting land uses in the study area





# Good transitions make good neighbors





# Forming a district of “good neighbors”: What are the challenges?

- Transitions in development scale in the study area





# Preserving the natural environment and enhancing access to open space: *Where are the opportunities?*

- Fresh Pond Corridor Enhancement Project
- Fresh Pond and Alewife reservations
- Implementing “best management practices”
- “Connecting the green beads”
  - from Committee member







# Environment and open space: What are the challenges?

- 90% impervious surface in Quadrangle
- Sensitivity of both Alewife and Fresh Pond reservations
- Managing development within environmental constraints



An aerial photograph of the Concord-Alewife area in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The image shows a mix of urban development, including residential neighborhoods, commercial buildings, and industrial areas. A large body of water, the Alewife Brook, runs through the center of the area. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange and green banner at the bottom.

# A review of the major technical considerations

- Transportation issues
- Market issues



# Transportation issues:

## Regional vs. local traffic

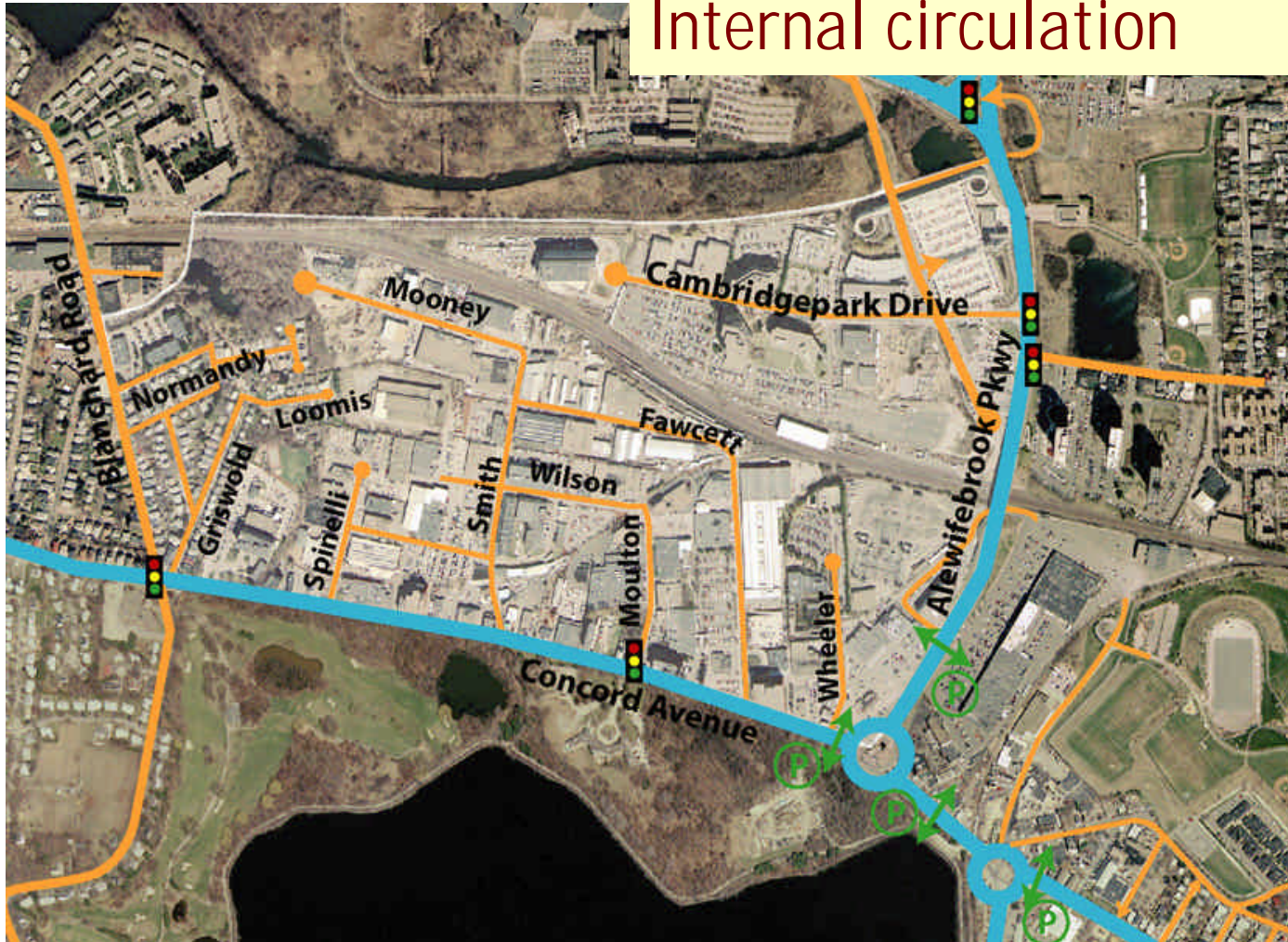
- Study area is a small piece of the puzzle.
- Difficult to influence regional traffic.
- Auto access to the study area itself.





# Transportation issues:

## Internal circulation





# Transportation issues:

## The role of transit

- Red Line service at Alewife – regional and local functions.
- “Feeder” bus routes to station
- Concord Avenue routes connect to Harvard Square
- Commuter rail







# Transportation issues: Transportation is one piece of the puzzle

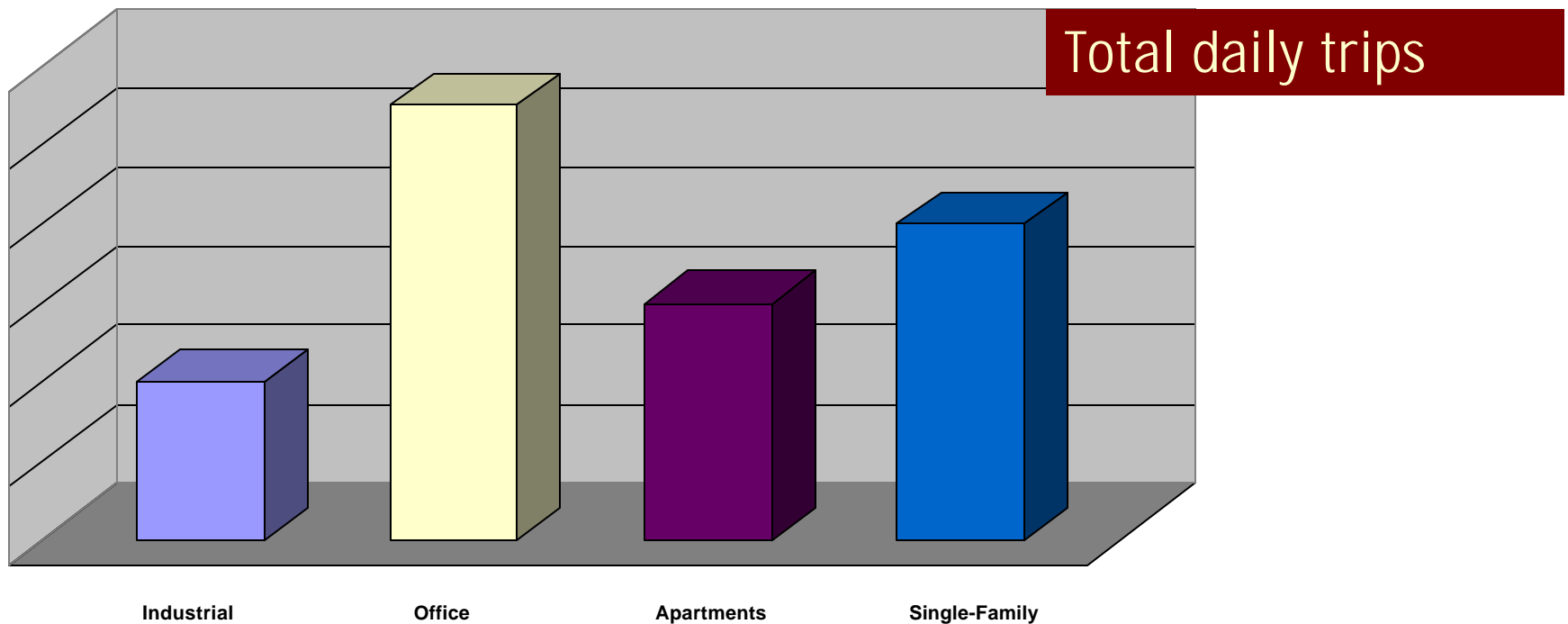
- Enhance opportunities for making connections
- Enhance non-auto mobility
- Influence different kinds of land use



# Transportation issues:

## Ways of dealing with limitations

How land-use options affect auto trip generation

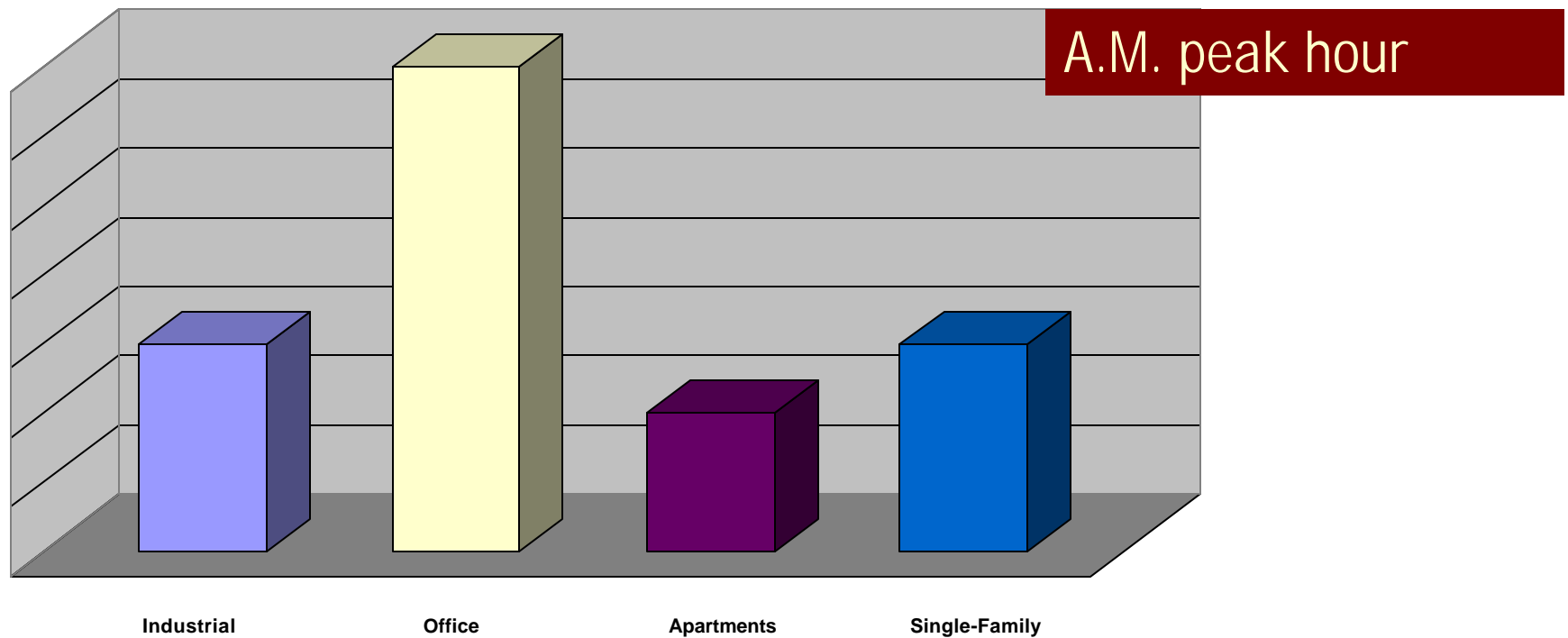




# Transportation issues:

## Ways of dealing with limitations

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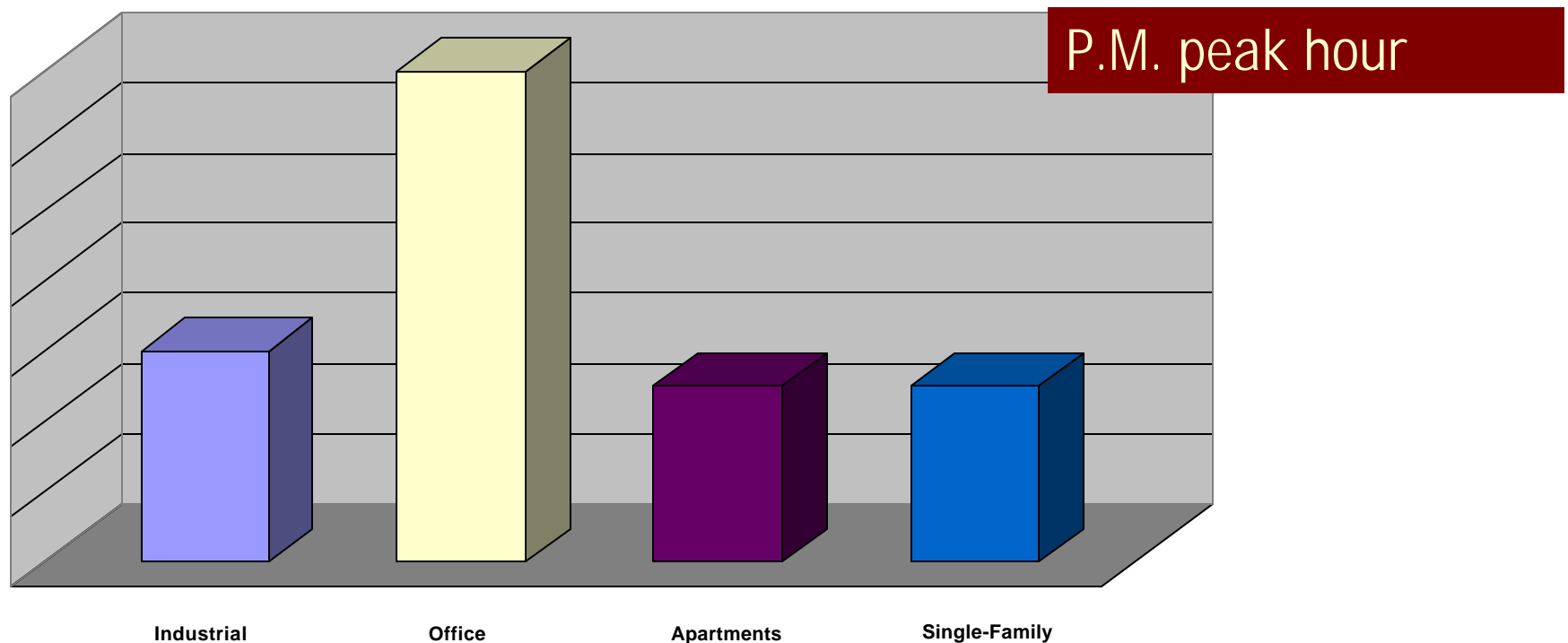




# Transportation issues:

## Ways of dealing with limitations

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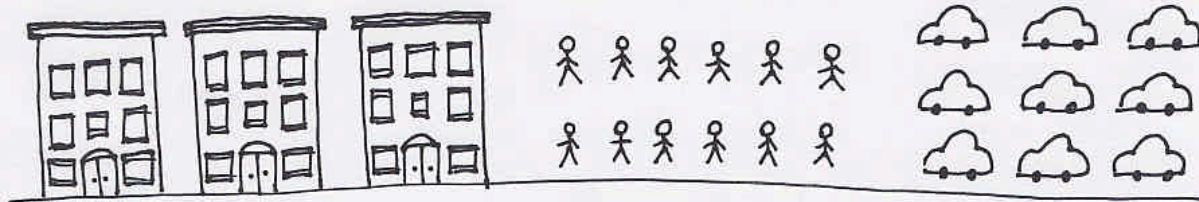




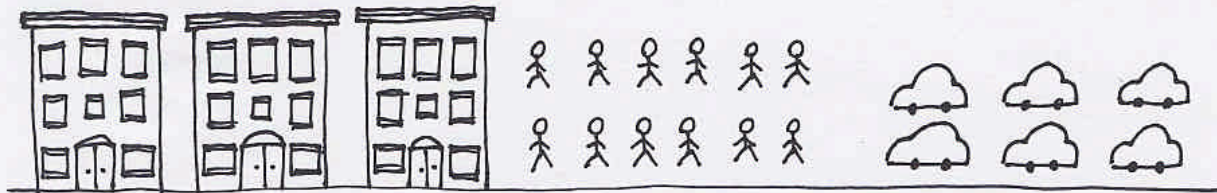
# Transportation issues: What impact could transportation have on development?

Making transit more attractive could change mode splits

75% use cars



50% use cars



# Market issues:

## Development trends for the region

- Residential
  - Ownership & rental: strong
  - Assisted Living/Independent Living: strong
  - Special Nursing Facility: moderate
- R&D/Industrial
  - R&D and warehouse: strong
  - Construction: moderate
  - Manufacturing: weak
- Retail
  - Neighborhood and community: strong
  - Regional: moderate
- Hospitality
  - Restaurant: moderate
  - Hotel: weak
- Office
  - Class A/B: moderate
  - Class C/D: weak





# Market issues:

## Development themes in the study area

- Residential
  - Mature neighborhood
  - In-fill housing
- Transit-oriented
  - Office/R&D park
  - High-density residential
- Industrial district
  - Established businesses
  - Business incubators
  - Back Streets uses
- Retail and commercial destinations
  - Convenience retail and consumer services
  - Restaurants
  - Hotel
- Community service destinations
  - Medical offices
  - School
  - AL/SNF



# Market issues:

## Existing patterns of development







# Market issues:

## Development trends and patterns

The nature of development to date:

- Opportunistic
- Eclectic
- Driven by:
  - parcel availability and location
  - ownership and occupancy
  - market context and timing

# Market issues:

## The “ambient outlook” for the study area

-  No change expected
  - Mature residential neighborhood
  - Major investment within last 20 years
  - Long-term leases or other restrictions
-  Areas of potential change
  - Higher-value uses or densities in the future
  - Vacant sites or buildings
  - Parking lots/yard storage







Market issues:

What could influence the “ambient outlook?”

Changes in:

- the market
- amenities
- parcelization
- streets
- access/transit
- zoning



# Workshops: “A Look at Concord-Alewife”

## Rules of the game

- assignments
- participants’ role
- facilitators’ role
- recorders’ role
- floaters’ role
- reporting back
- time



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Concord, Massachusetts, showing a river (the Concord River) flowing through the center. The river is bordered by industrial and commercial buildings, some with large parking lots. There are green spaces and residential areas visible on the outskirts. The image is slightly faded to serve as a background for the text.

# Workshops: Reporting out

- Where were the surprises?
- Where were the exciting opportunities?



# Next steps

- Input from public meeting to inform Committee's work
- Charrette scheduled for Saturday May 17, Tobin School